

TO THE HONOURABLE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
NOW ASSEMBLED IN
PARLIAMENT.



The Humb'le PETITION of many Thousands of Clothiers, Weavers, Baymakers, Seargmakers, Saymakers, Clothworkers, and Worsted-Combers, within this REALME of ENGLAND, whose Names are here under written, As well for and on the behalf of themselves, as of all other Persons that Trade and deale in WOOLL; And the using and imploying thereof in the making of CLOTH, STUFFS, and other Manufactories, of WOOLL within the said Kingdom and the Dominion of WALES, Subscribed unto also by divers of LONDON concerned, being dealers in and adventurers of the Commodities made of WOOLL.

SHEWETH:

THAT whereas the Wools of this Kingdom and of the said Dominion, are the principal and chiefest Staple Commodity thereof: And that by the using of the said Wools in the making of Cloth and Stuffs of the Old and New Drapery, and other Manufactories of Wool, many thousand of Families have heretofore had their sole livelyhood and subsistence: And in respect of the Customs for the exportation of such Clothes, Stuffs, and Manufactures into Forraign parts, have brought to this Kingdom a great Revenue, and the makers thereof from time to time, being enabled in the payment of such Subsidies, and Taxes, as by the State have been required from them: The consideration whereof heretofore, moved the Wisdom of the State in former time, to make and provide divers good Lawes for the prevention of the Frauds and Deceits used in the winding and sale of Wool; Whereby it was provided that none should winde, or cause, or suffer to be wound and sold any Fleece of Wool, the same nor being first sufficiently washed, nor winde, nor suffer to be wound within any Fleece of VVool, any Lambs Wool, Refuse Wool, Cot, Tar, Tailocks, Cleglocks, Hinderthinks, Clay, Dunge, Comber, or any other filth or trash, whereby the Fleece may become more weighty, to the deceit and losse of the buyer; upon paine the seller of any such deceitful Wools, to forfeit for every Fleece of Wool so sold, six pence: The omission and neglect of the due execution of which and other good Lawes tending thereunto, hath emboldened the owners or Sheep and other usuall sellers of Wool, as FARMERS, Staplers, Ingrossers, Felmongers, Jobbers, Brogers, and others in latter times to practise and use more deceits and abuses, and to sell and utter more deceivable Wools, and trash made up therein, then are hereby before expressed, or hath been in the winding of WOOLL formerly practised, for that besides the deceits as aforesaid used, whereas Farmers and other owners of Sheep, have usually heretofore shorn their Sheep within three or four dayes next after their washing; and if they go longer unshorn, and put into, or suffered to go into Fallow fields, or High wayes, it is needful they should be washed again before shorn; they now in divers Countries and places within this Kingdom do commonly after the Sheep are washed (however the weather fall out) let them go unshorn as well in Fallow fields and High-wayes, as Pasture grounds, by the space of two or three weeks together, and never wash them again, thereby to cause them to sweat and gather soyl and make the WOOLL more weighty. And that Felmongers by their not well washing their WOOLL, and selling the same before it be dry, do cause the VVool so sold oftentimes to shrink two pounds waight at the least in every twenty pound weight thereof, besides the great deceits used in most parts of this Kingdom by mingling and putting up of all Sorts of VVool together: AND by the needlesse and too often branding of Sheep with great brand marks of Pitch, and that at divers and sundry times in the year, on several places of the Sheep, and commonly on those parts where the VVool is best, and that most usually not long before they are shorn, thereby to cause the same to be the more weighty: And the Petitioners for the most part carrying the same by Water, whereby, or otherwise taking wet causeth the same to heat and thereby to melt the said Pitch marks, which by running through the VVool doth spoyle a great part thereof, and hinder the deviding and working of the same, and the Petitioners thereby constrained to cut off and cast away such pitch marks, the charge whereof, besides the losse of the VVool which is the greatest, is very considerable: THE cutting off which Brand at the shearing of the sheep, would be very litle or no charge to the owners of the Sheep, (if there were any need so to brand them) By all which the forementioned frauds and deceit, the Petitioners are very great losers, besides the losse that doth redound to the Common wealth thereby. For Reformation and redresse whereof the Petitioners have made severall addresses to the KING and PARLIAMENT, and did about Eight years since (no Sessions of PARLIAMENT then being) make their grievances known, touching the Premises to the KINGS MAJESTY that now is, who then was pleased to cause a Commission under the Great Seal of England to be issued forth unto divers persons of worth, who afterwards having spent much time in the examination of the abuses complained of, did amongst other things certify divers frauds and abuses in the winding up and sale of VVOLL then practised: And for remedy thereof, thought fit that Commissioners and Officers should be assigned and authorized to see the said LAWES put in execution, and other remedies in that behalf made and provided against the offenders in the Premises; In pursuance whereof, some of the Petitioners for, and one the behalf of themselves and others did in the beginning of this present PARLIAMENT exhibit their humble Petition to this Honourable Assembly touching the Premises, and severall addresses have been